1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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discussions, it is part of the Santal living cultural heritage and hence of continuing influence.

Various investigations of the rebellion support Man's conclusion that the following four Santal grievances were chiefly responsible for the rebellion: (1) "grasping and rapacious money lenders"; (2) "personal and hereditary debt bondage"; (3) "corruption and extortion by police helping moneylenders"; (4) "impossibility of Santal getting court redress" (Man 1867: from Culshaw and Archer 1945). A fifth contributing factor of an endogenous nature is what Man describes as Santal "improvidence."[4] Leaving aside Man's pejoratives, there is abundant evidence that his understanding of the rebellion was substantially correct. By legal and extra-legal means the Santal were systematically being stripped of their ownership rights over their land and becoming tenants and even slaves of Hindus who knew how to manipulate the law and were accustomed to gaining their ends in the context of the market.

The Santal felt themselves exploited, and not without cause. The emphasis in their culture on "redistribution"[5] and other leveling mechanisms plus their heavy commitment to "pleasure" made the Santal easy prey of the merchant and moneylender. To the British observers and to the Hindus the Santal were "improvident." Ultimately the Santal erupted in a violent revolt during which they mutilated a number of Hindu moneylenders and took vengeance on guilty and innocent alike. One reads of a Hindu money lender whose limbs were severed one

[4] See Datta 1940 for the most complete bibliography of relevant primary documents.

[5] Polanyi 1957.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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177 439 [286] [323] [534] Although the Santal used to do some weaving and pottery-making, they have traditionally obtained almost everything except foodstuffs and a few forest products from neighboring tribal or Hindu peoples. Even the drums and the flutes which are so integrated in the "pleasure" complex are invariably purchased from Hindu specialists. Furthermore, elite borrowings have often become "naturalized," i.e., accepted as Santal and then widely adopted so as to close the gap. Nevertheless, emulation of Hindus did not always go unnoticed and it will be recalled that there is evidence of resistance to such Hinduization.

177 197 [601] [614] The many Hindu cognates in this text give some indication of the extent of linguistic borrowing. Only a few Santal kin terms are of non-Indo-European origin, and the system of dyadic relations among kin is very much like that of the Hindus; one of the largest clans, Hansdak', has a name clearly of Indo-European origin (*hans* = duck in Santali and Hindi), but one also notes the syncretism with the non-Indo-European [538] (*dak* = water in Santali). Even parts of the Rāmāyaṇa are sung in Santali and on occasion the Santal are allowed to enter the tale. Considering the prevalence of "parochialization" and "universalization" in India,[30] it is possible that some of what is common to the two cultures is of Santal origin. But the heavy incorporation of vocabulary clearly of Indo-European origin suggests that the flow was largely from the Hindus to the Santal.

177 178 184 Prior to industrial employment in this century a small cultural gap separated the elite and common Santal. Though there was some differential emulation of Hinduism it was largely of isolated traits which often became naturalized, and the basic "pleasure" orientation of the Santal was hardly altered.

[30] Marriott 1955:211.

[P. 44 is blank]

538 668 The great task that Semlet' hopes soon to undertake, and for which money is being collected, is to provide an authoritative text of Santal tradition written in the new script. At periodic Semlet' meetings one may observe eloquent representations of the cultural movement and its intimate connection with solidarity and the political rank path.

178 539 668 782 In place of traditional prayers such as: "Greetings, *Marañ Buru*; in the name of this festival I offer you so do not allow any sickness, headache, or stomach ache to come. We give to you that we may remain in good health," one hears prayers more in keeping with an emergent "Great Tradition" such as the following: "Greetings, *Marañ Buru*; be kind enough and pleased to accept my bowing and greeting. I prostrate myself before you and direct my attention to you. Come down as the wind and fly like a storm. Guide me in the path of righteousness. I bow down in all directions."

668 539 771 The following excerpts from typical speeches at Semlet' meetings give an "inside view" of the cultural movement and its social significance:

> In one village people stopped worshipping in the Sacred Grove and began to follow a Hindu sect which makes no offerings but only prays. Within three years they fell ill in every house. . . . Some "medicine man" from another village told them it is because you stopped worshipping in the Sacred Grove, so they returned to their old ways. Other people's religions will not make us strong. We should worship properly, then we can raise our religion so many will respect it.

> In ancient times it was said, and our "aboriginal" leaders also say, Sarna is our religion. The *diku* say our religion is Hindu. Then

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

[p. 1]

FOREWORD

Fifty years ago, in 1887, the late Rev. L. O. Skrefsrud published The Traditions and Institutions of the Santhals, Hoṛkoṛen Mare Hapṛamko reak Katha, as a guide for the Santals, especially in the customary matters dealt with in the book, and also on account of its ethnological value. It was re-edited by me, in 1916 and 1929, only with a short preface and a few pages of fresh matter, added at the end, at the request of certain Santals. What here follows is a translation with a number of explanatory footnotes and some additional matter. As only a very few would be able to use the work in the original Santali, and as it is of considerable ethnological interest, I have repeatedly been asked to translate it. My translation is absolutely literal, in order to enable the reader, as far as possible, to understand the Santal mentality and way of expression. 128

With the exception of a short story of the Santal insurrection of 1855 the original work was taken down by Skrefsrud from the mouth of an old guru, named Kolean. According to a statement towards the end of the book the dictation was finished on the 15th of February, 1871. 115 128

Skrefsrud once told me, that he had hunted everywhere among the Santals to find a man who knew his people and their traditions and customs, and that Kolean without comparison was the best authority he had been able to find. Skrefsrud further told me, that the book contains absolutely nothing of his own, the whole being a faithful record of Kolean's words and language.

I cannot, however, help thinking that Skrefsrud had something to do with the arrangement. The language is easy and fine, and Kolean's narrative was based on oral tradition handed down verbatim by teacher to disciple, from generation to generation, a practice which, as Skrefsrud states in the Annual Report of the Mission for the year 1887—88, "has now fallen into disuse". 128 538

This does not exclude the possibility of our learning something from other sources, and some Santals have actually narrated things which Kolean did not mention. Sometimes we can see that such tales are adaptations of Hindu lore, as when some gurus maintain that their ancestors followed Rama to fight Ravona in Ceylon. In other cases, especially with regard to Santal customs and institutions, we may have to do with independent lines of tradition. 115 [177] [178] [538]

Kolean hailed, as he tells at the end, from a village called Pabea in a "country" (rural district) called Paṇḍra in the district of Manbhum to the southwest of the Santal Parganas.

1 Cole Sta. Mus. – Bodding.

2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

He stated that he was a disciple of a guru named Buku. Together with other Santals he had emigrated eastwards. His old home being in Manbhum explains that some very few of his statements are different from what is the present custom in the Santal Parganas.

Kolean was a guru, a designation borrowed from the Hindus but adapted to suit Santal society. A Santal guru is a man who is supposed to know certain things, e. g., what should be recited at some ceremonial functions, and who is able to act as a reciter when called upon to do so. Any Santal can become a guru, by attaching himself to an older guru and gradually learning from him. In this way we cannot expect absolute uniformity throughout.

The use of such recitations may partly be due to imitation of Hindu customs, and there are definite statements in the traditional tales here translated to the effect that the ancestors on a certain occasion, after long deliberations, decided to abandon some customs of their own and to adopt Hindu usages instead. In this connexion it is of interest to note that the Santals often use songs in a foreign language, notably Bihari, during their festivals and at cremations. And it is a curious fact that many Santals do not understand these songs. It is evident that we have, to some extent, to do with borrowings, but it would be an exaggeration to maintain that the whole has been borrowed.

The traditional history of the world as contained in the first part of Kolean's narrative is recited twice in connexion with the life of every Santal, first at the caco chaṭiar, when a child is ceremoniously given full social right, and finally at the bhaṇḍan, the funeral ceremony, when the deceased is handed over to the next world and to the care of the departed ancestors.

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178 or rice along with them, so that there is no food at home; in spite of this when they come home and no food has been prepared for them, they scold their wives a good deal and even beat them. The poor wife, where is she to get anything with which to prepare food? [426] If they have no paddy or rice, they will drink, making debts. Then in the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) the Sunḍi comes, harasses and threatens them, and carts their paddy bundles away. The wife and children of such a man pass their time in much suffering, as regards food and clothes. From the forest they bring vegetables and different kinds of tubers, cook and eat these. Formerly they were drinking four, or six, or if it became very much, eight leaf-cups; in this way their strength was not diminished; they were very strong and vigorous like youths. Nowadays, by constantly drinking and by marrying before they are fullgrown, they are becoming puny and stunted in growth; by behaving in such a way,— how should they retain their strength?

c. Stories and folk-tales.

538 By fairy-stories, folk-tales, and conundrums the Santals feel much enjoyment. In the evening the old men teach them this. The sons and daughters-in-law are occupied in the evening cooking rice and curry, making leaf-cups and leaf-plates, and the old people, husband and wife, tell the children fairy-stories and folk-tales and ask them riddles, to make them happy. If anyone knows a number of fairy-stories and folk-tales, the young people of the village will also gather at his place. And at the threshing-floors, when it is cold and they lie in the huts there, the young men learn much of this. Some people know so many; they tell the others folk-tales the whole night until dawn, still they are not finished, and those who listen do not get tired either; at such times they have no thought at all of dancing; listening they are utterly charmed by joy[3].

Girls and boys mostly learn riddles, and all day long they ask each other such. The young men learn more fairy-stories and folk-tales; even if girls learn the same, they will only get enough courage to let this be known in the presence of people when they have reached the age of old women. The folk-tales are especially about jackals; the fairy-stories are about kings and landlords and about different kinds of people, and the riddles are about a thousand different matters. When they start a riddle, they say: "A riddle, kite, kite", thereupon they give out the riddle[4].

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113 [114] [3] The Santals have a very large number of folk-tales and stories. The present writer has collected several hundreds. Ten such tales have been published in the Publications of the Indian Institute of the Royal Frederik University, Kristiania 1934, and 98 other tales by Institutet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning (Santal Folk Tales, vol. I to III, Oslo 1925, 1927, and 1929). A few have also been published in a similar way by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. The manuscript of several hundreds, all written down for me by Santal men and women, is now in the University Library, Oslo. [4] See P. O. Bodding, Santal Riddles. Witchcraft among the Santals. Oslo Etnografiske Museums Skrifter, vol. 3, fasc. 3. Oslo 1943.

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

who shot the deer, him they give the hind half; and of the head they give him one split piece, of the spleen one split piece and of the liver one split piece. To the village priest they give the flesh on both sides of the backbone and a part of the liver, to offer to the spirits. For the village headman they take out one thigh as his part of the rump belonging to the killer, the village headman gets the upper part of this; what is below this his deputy gets, and the end of the leg the Godet gets. And the kettle-drum drummer gets for himself a separate part of this. The remaining flesh the hunters divide equally among themselves, and for the men who did not go to hunt, they leave a little flesh, and this they apportion to them, house by house; this portion they call an extra share (capo joro). Of hares and peafowls the village priest has no right to get anything, neither has the village headman any right, nor have they any right to get an extra portion; of these only the one who shot gets his share, and the remaining flesh the hunters divide in equal portions among themselves. They who carry get the belly, of deer and of hares. This they call the belly for carrying. Of all kinds of birds the carriers get the gizzard.

The village priest wraps the flesh he is to offer up in a dry leaf and roasts it and offers it to The Five the Six, Pargana haram, Mañjhi haram, and Marañ buru; having offered it he eats the flesh.

The village headman has, by customary law, to give five half-seers of rice as a hunt bounty; this the hunters cook together with the flesh of the heads into a hash and eat. Thereupon they come to their respective homes with their portions. The shooter's rightful portion and the village headman's portion they carry along; the headman's portion they bring into his house, and the rightful portion of the killer of an animal into his house. They who carry and bring this, get beer and food at both places. In the house of the shooter they separate from his rightful portion the pot-flesh on the underside of the knee. This the sisters and daughters of the shooter get. However far away they may live, the shooter brings this to them and leaves it there, and these treat him to beer and food, and they look upon this as a great honour. His part of the head and the liver the shooter cooks with rice into a hash and offers this to the ancestors of his family.

g. Composing songs and the like.

Parables they have gradually composed, at different occasions. Taking up what has been seen they have composed these. If a person suddenly speaks and reveals this or that, then others, thinking that this is good and fitting, will also speak the same, and thus it is spread about. Folk-tales and fairy-stories are not composed nowadays, only old ones are in vogue, learnt one after the other. Riddles we have also only old ones. To mimic no one is able to learn, only by having a natural ability people are able to mimic, to show the faults of people. The songs are mostly old ones; still they are now and then composing a few new ones. Men have composed riñja, matwar, and marriage songs, and

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562 585 302 (5) Vermilion is applied as a mark of recognition, even to a *rakhni* (mistress), by a married woman of any Santal clan during marriage ceremonies. when all married women of the tribe are anointed according to custom.

562 428 (6) When a man dies leaving his wife and brother and other kins on both sides, the widow inherits everything, provided her husband was separate from his brothers. But if he lived jointly (with his brothers), the widow gets maintenance only.

(7) The daughter has no share in her father's property, if there are male children.

(8) But if there are no sons, the daughter inherits in preference to all agnates.

562 *Legal status of Santal women in the Santal Parganas*

The status enjoyed by the Santal woman in her tribal fabric as revealed by the researches of Rev. P. O. Bodding presents an interesting study to show how an originally legal non-entity is gradually acquiring her rights of property recognised by indirect legal fictions.

[538] To revert to Santal myths and folk-tales we find woman being credited with uncanny powers associated with witches. Women, to the primitive Santal, can befool even the "*Bongas*" (the evil-spirit deities)

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881 of the male-child to all the privileges of the 783 community life of the tribe. It is relevant to add [582] that marriage is not permitted to any one who has [764] not gone through the ceremony and should one die (without going through the ritual) his dead-body cannot be cremated nor are his bones thrown into the river, the most important step in a Santal funeral. It is, however, frequently seen that the father of several children performs the *Caco-chatiar* ceremony of all of them together.

As an initial step, *lang hàṇḍia*, is prepared in the early morning. The villagers procure oil and [622] turmeric. The Headman and *Paranik* drink rice- [624] beer (*hàṇḍia*) and send for the villagers. The women [793] then rub oil and turmeric on the bodies of the *Naeke* (village-priest) and their assistants and this is done to all in a customary order of precedence from the village-officials down to the villagers. Rice-beer is served. The Santals dance and sing.

[538] Then comes the turn of an old man of the village, a *Guru*, the repository of Santal lores to recite the tribal story of the creation of the world and the wanderings of the Santal (already narrated in the 1st. Chapter, Santal Genesis and Migration) ancestors till they came to their present habitat.

It is then emphasised that all the impurities of the male-child have been purged away and by participating in the drinking bout of *hàṇḍia*, they

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CHAPTER XI

SANTAL FOLK-LORE

121 From the very dawn of human society, man has tried to explain the mysteries of creation and life by means of stories. This is true both of civilized and unlettered folk who sought thereby to throw some light on inexplicable phenomena by weaving tales round them to satisfy the hunger for knowledge.

121 We are not out here to trace the origin of myths
• 538 and legends; but wish to introduce to the reader the wealth of Santal folk-lore with the idea that it might illuminate the dim recesses of the Santal mind, and show how they think and feel in the presence of the baffling mysteries of life and how they interpret them.

538 Just like the grand-mother of the Bengali household, the Old Mañjhi of the Santal villages is the repository of these tales. Men, old and young, gather round him in moments of leisure and listen to him in rapt attention as he tells his stories seasoning them with flashes of humour, propounding riddles to the listeners and by adorning the stories with morals as the experience of his ripe old age.

[128] In course of the following pages we shall give
[126] the readers a collection of such tales as gathered by us at Mayurbhanj.

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defeated. They praised Gumda wholeheartedly. 539*
Now, they searched out the teeth and went to the Raja and presented him with the find.

The Raja was so pleased that he gave his daughter in marriage to Gumda and further gave him half his kingdom.

A GENERAL VIEW OF SANTAL FOLK-TALES* 538

Animal Stories

Forest-dwellers as the Santals were, they have folk-tales attributing human traits to the animals much in the strain of Aesop. Although one should not probe too much for hidden allegories, the lessons of these stories are sometimes quite clear, and it is more interesting to see how animal life has been interpreted by the erstwhile denizens of the primaeval jungles.

From the eight stories dealing with jackals, we find them to be the most cunning of animals and the most treacherous. In "The Jackal and the Crow" the jackal eats up his bosom-friend, the crow. "The Jackal and the Chickens" teaches us how a jackal and a hen regarded each other as brothers and sisters and

* This is a critical review of some of the stories in the Folk-tales of the Santal Parganas, collected by Rev. P. O. Bodding and translated by C. H. Bompas, I.C.S. [113]

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•538 how he made a meal of his friend along with the chickens. But there is retribution in store, and the "The Jackal Punished" shows how the crafty animal met with his death at the hands of the chickens. The presence of mind of foxes is illustrated by the story "Fox and his Wife," in which we see how a matrimonial misunderstanding between the couple was amicably solved in presence of a greater menace in the shape of their arbitrator, the tiger. But as the leopard cannot change his skin, the fox cannot live without his cunning and we soon read how as private tutor to the children of a crocodile, Mr. Fox eats up his pupils.

Santals have other stories dealing with the rest of the animals, equally full of interest. We see how the elephant ran a race with ants and found them running neck-to-neck at every step, forgetting that they might not be the actual competitors. We learn how friendship between the strong and the weak does not last and how the latter always seeks an opportunity to injure the former. But this pessimistic proposition has its exception in the case of children, and we read of an undying love between a tiger-cub and a calf.

Tales of Bongas

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In course of the previous pages, we have seen that *Bongas* are spirits who exist everywhere and take an active part in human affairs. But the most

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uncanny part of the whole problem is that they assume human shapes, and thus like to enter into marital union with Santals of the opposite sexes. But the most

A perusal of the stories relating to *Boṅgas* reveals that in their houses the *Boṅgas* have strange coiled up seats as hoods of serpents (*Boṅga gando*, in Mayurbhanj Santali), near which, fearful tigers* and leopards crouch, spreading consternation to the human beings kidnapped. They eat like men, but when their dinner is brought into this earth of ours, lo and behold! it will change into leaves and cow-dung, in the twinkling of an eye. Unions between human beings and *Boṅgas* have their temporal advantages, and we see how during the pendency of a liaison between a Santal and a *Boṅga*-girl, all his affairs prospered beyond expectation.

The *modus operandi* of *Boṅga*-lovers in forming such unions is seen in the story of how a *Boṅga*-girl,

* On this point Mr. Samra Mañjhi of Bantali, Rairangpur, Mayurbhanj stated as follows:—

Some Boṅgas have their serpents, tigers, deer and bears as their workers. The serpents are their seats, the tigers are their dogs, the deer are their oxen and the bears are their servants. The beasts do not always remain in the Boṅgas' house. They roam about the jungles, but they remain under their master's control. Whenever the Boṅga calls on them, they are present, ready to carry out his orders. In Santali, the serpents are called *Boṅga gando*, the tigers are *guirus sota*, the deer *Koda* and *dari* and the bears are *Kanmi*.

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on being abducted by force, these little pupils are made to command tigers so that they (pupils) may lose all fear. The next stage is reached when the students are led to the most powerful *Boṅgas* and are trained how to pray for their uncanny gifts and to become possessed. Thus emerges from the school, the full-fledged witch, holding a light in her hand and flourishing a broom tied round her waist. She is now formally married to a *Boṅga*, although, she may have a second husband in the person of a man in the social sense.

The curriculum thus completed, the witch is now awarded her degree (*Sid atang*) by pulling out a man's liver and eating it with her trainer. Should she refuse this cannibalistic meal, she will turn lunatic or meet with her death.

From the dozen stories in Mr. Bompas' collection, we learn that there are men also who learn the craft, and we read the strange protest of a man, who, after initiation into witch-craft, refused to eat a human being, because he was an orphan and had no relations to eat. The Santal social fabric is thus full of witches who marry men in disguise and merrily meet together at night to devise plans how to eat their kith and kin. And when they leave the beds of their Santal husbands to meet their *Boṅga* lovers, they keep behind a *Boṅga*-woman as a substitute-wife. But, it may be that the man

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754 538 [796] may become suspicious and brand the partner of his bed with red-hot fuel. Then it is for the *Boŋga* to fly away "in a flame of fire." Thus they masquerade in the garb of wives and dear relations, and if at all, are discovered by accident. We read in the story "Two Witches" how one Chandrai discovered the plan of a woman and her mother-in-law, both witches, to eat up the husband of the former, while causing the witch-doctors to see the faces of two other innocent women as casting the spell, in the oiled *sal-leaf*. "The old woman took up a hatchet and went to where her son was digging the hole. She waited till he bent down to throw the earth with his hands and then cut open his back and pulled out the liver and heart and brought them into the house. Her unfortunate son felt a spasm when his mother struck him but he did not know what had hurt him and there was no visible wound."•

796 538 Similarly, in "*The Sarsagun Maiden*", we see how a Santal bride was spirited away by a *Boŋga* youth and kept captive till she was rescued by the chivalrous bridegroom.

Even school boys are not spared the amorous attentions of Boŋgas. We are treated to the story of such an abducted pupil with his slate and books,

• P. 433, *Folk-tales of the Santal Parganas*, Bompas.

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who was conveyed to the nether-world and detained till he grew home sick.

The extent of interest taken by *Boṅgas* in human affairs, is best illustrated by another story, "The *Boṅga* Headman," in which we find how an invisible Headman advised Santals on all tribal matters and even helped the villagers with utensils for village-feasts.

If men have goats and cows for their cattle, the *Boṅgas* have their deer. This we see in "*Lakhan and the Boṅgas*".

Boṅgas can even be thieves. One of the folk-tales tells of such a spirit as residing in the house of the Headman, and we read how he stole every kind of grain and food, cooked and uncooked, from the houses of the villagers.

Whenever a Santal falls in trouble, he thinks a *Boṅga* requires propitiation. We read of seven brothers in "The *Boṅga's* victim," who do not hesitate to dedicate their beloved sister as a sacrifice to such a godling, as a reward to him for showing water to them after a tiresome hunt.

[782]

They can be capable of gratitude. We see how a youth named Ramai was endowed with the third eye, through the grace of a *Boṅga* he had saved from exorcists, by which he saw *Boṅgas* ordinarily invisible and followed the speech of ants.

Again we hear how "The Sister-in-law who

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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776 Again we hear how "The Sister-in-law who
538 was a Witch" requisitioned the services of an
754 immense bearded *Boṅga*, with long matted hair, to kill her brother-in-law by setting on a tiger for the offence that he, in a playful teasing mood, was delaying the eating of the dinner she had brought to the field.

Witches can be, however, very useful devils. If detected and cornered, they can be of immense service to men. This we see in the story of Ramjit *Boṅga*, where a witch, on her secret being out, promised to be the tribal *Ojha* and cure the diseases of the Santals. Once a witch, always a witch: the man who has once learnt it cannot at any time forget the craft.

538 *Fondness for Verbal Quibbles and Metaphors*

Any one reading the folk-tales of the Santals cannot but be struck with the love the tribe displays for speaking in enigmatic riddles and metaphors. We consider it worth-while to devote special attention to this feature.

539 In the "Fool and his dinner" we see how a Santal asked his mother-in-law about the recipe of a dish he was offered at dinner and was told, "I have cooked that which is behind you." The fool stole the door, and tried to cook it, but all that his mother-in-law meant was that she had cooked shoots of bamboo. Failure to understand such quibbles

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Look there at my daughter-in-law!
Look, how beautiful she looks like the
Kursà flower;
But I could not win her heart.
To get her as a bride, I spent all I had,
But I could not win her heart.

796 533 538 In the chapter on "Cycle of Santal Festivals," we have noted an extract of a song singing the advent of Spring, during the *Baha* (Flower Festival). This festival has got an elaborate cycle of songs, many of which are not easily amenable to translation, being full of archaic Santali; but they contain poetry that is simple, spontaneous and fragrant of the "smell of Mother Earth." One sample taken from the first two stanzas of a duet, as given there, will give the reader a glimpse of the essential poetry of the Santals. Similarly, we have seen that the *Pata* (Santal *Còròk*, Hook-swinging festival) has its own round of songs, and we have marked the *joi de vivre* as reflected in the song already quoted, (in our account of the festival) in which a woman requests her sister to accompany her to the "uplands" to witness the *Pata* festival for three days to their heart's content.

Marriage Songs

585 538 533 Marriage, always a fruitful source of poetry and humour, has produced a song-cycle amongst the

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Santals. Our poetry-bag can be drawn upon to illustrate some of the customs and the corresponding emotions in the Santal bride and bride-groom. 585 538 538

A bride sings:

Niñ ñutum dò baba bargeṛe mad waepe, 585 538 538
Guric' mandere khunṭi bidme,
Niñ ñutum bàryatko hòṛ rege daram kope,
Niñren juridò natorege.

(Translation)

O father, build the canopy in the field (near the house, not in the court-yard).
Fix the post (of the canopy) in the cow-dung heap.
And when the bride-groom's party comes, meet them on the way (and make them return),
Because my (life's) mate is in the village.

Here is presumably a case of a girl being given marriage without her consent; a formal courtship being not always favoured by many parents now. Naturally, there are a number of unhappy marriages, and in the poem, we have just translated, the bride-groom is prescribed a humiliating reception because the bride's lover is already in the village. [584]

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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And the knot of my hair sways side-ways;
However I may look, I must stick them in my hair. [301]

In the following song, a Santal is wailing for the loss of his garden of flowers:—

Nadika dhare dhare amakar bagan Raghu fulakar bagan.
Fulakar bagan Raghu basate marilò.
Amakar bagan Raghu, hure marilò.

(Translation)

By the side of the river is my garden, O Raghu!
The garden of flowers has been despoiled by the wind, O Raghu!
My garden of flowers, O Raghu, has been blasted by the hail.

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Flowers in bloom have the strongest appeal to the Santals, more specially to their women-folk. It is a common refrain heard in the Santal Parganas "*Biti kande campa lagi, beta kande dhuti lagi*" (the daughter weeps for the Campa flower and the son for the cloth). Here is a party who would request the gardener for the *berdòr* flowers:—

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Maraṅ buru còṛre
Berdòr bahado jèṅgèt' jèṅget'.

3: Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

(Translation)

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In the plantain garden
The plant glimmers;
O sister, the leaves quiver and quiver.
In a splendid mansion-like house,
The wife shines in her beauty.

Songs of Birds

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If the Santal folk-tales are replete with references to animals, the folk-songs have their share of the Santal's affection for birds. The following verse refers to white-paddy birds:—

Bandale bandale nàtiñ àkin bankdò
Bandale bandale pòsaò àkin beralidò;
Tòkoeraca natiñ àkin bankdò
Cuna raca natiñ àkin bankdò
Cuna raca pòsad àkin beralidò

(Translation)

In every *bundh*, a pair of white paddy birds peck food.
In every *bundh*, a pair of birds get plump by food.
In whose court-yard do the pair of white paddy-birds peck food?,
In whose court-yard do the pair of birds get plump?,

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

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Mòṇṛèṇkoko ruia ḍhelka ḍemba
Ja Gosaṇe, turuikoko naranaka sakaa.

(Translation)

(Men) The Fives are five brothers.
(Women) O, the six goddesses* are six sisters.
(Men) The fives beat on broad *demba* (musical instruments).
(Women) O, the six goddesses blow on horns.

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We think that here we may usefully quote a song reflecting reformist ideas so far as Santal religious practices are concerned. It is not definitely known if a Christian idea or the Sapha Hòṛ philosophy is being given expression to in the following lines, but anyhow we smell something new:

Num rakap kate naṛka sapha kate,
Dhòròm mundil teṅ bòlòyena,
Dhòròm mundilrè bòlò kate dhòròm puthi yiṅ parhaolet,
Hòrak dhòròmho ruaṛèna.

(Translation)

A man is presumably speaking to himself:
After bath and washing my hair with (the soapy) mud,

* The six goddesses are named, Dangi, Pungi, Hisi, Dumni, Chita and Kapra. They are all wives of Mòṇṛèṇko (the Fives).

4: Biswas .D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
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believed that the Santals came to the present abode from North East India.

Dr. A. Campbell[1] is of the opinion that the Santals, or rather the people of whom they are a portion, occupied the country on both sides of the Ganges, but more especially that in the north. Starting from the north-east, they gradually worked their way up the valley of the Ganges till we find them in the neighbourhood of Benares, with their headquarters near Mirzapur. Here the main body, which had kept to the northern bank of the river, crossed, and, heading southwards, came to the Vindhya hills. This obstruction deflected them to the left, and they at length found themselves on the tableland of Chota Nagpur, and he further writes "Efforts have been made to identify the countries, rivers, forts, etc. mentioned in the traditions of the Santals with those of similar names in Chota Nagpur. Localities have in many instances been found bearing traditional names, and the inference has been drawn that it was here that the traditions of the Santals took their rise, and that their institutions were formed. But only a slight knowledge of these traditions is necessary to show that they belong to a much more remote period than the location of the Santals in Chota Nagpur, and to countries separated from it by many hundreds of miles."

Objecting to the above theory Sir Herbert Risley[2] writes the following "A people whose only means of recording facts consists of tying knots in strings, and who have no bards to hand down a national epic by

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1. The Traditional Migration of the Santal Tribe, Indian Antiquity pp. 103-4.
2. Tribes and Castes of Bengal Vol. II pp. 215-6.

[113]

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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oral tradition, can hardly be expected to preserve the memory of their past long enough or accurately enough for their accounts of it to possess any historical value. If, however, the legends of the Santals are regarded as an account of recent migrations, their general purport will be found to be fairly in accord with actual facts'. He further writes "The earliest settlements which Santal tradition speaks of, those in Ahiri Pipri and Chai Champa, lie on the north-western frontier of the tableland of Hazaribagh and in the direct line of advance of the numerous Hindu immigrants from Bihar. That the influx of Hindus has in fact driven the Santals eastward is beyond doubt, and the line which they are known to have followed in their retreat corresponds on the whole with that attributed to them in their tribal legends".

Rev. P.O. Bodding of the Scandinavian Mission in the Santal Parganas and well known for his works on the life and customs of the Santals believes that the Santals entered India from the North Eastern gate. He draws his conclusion from their customs, language and physical features. He points out that many of the customs as preserved, point to the east, even further than Assam. He also mentions from their language that the linguistic relatives of the Santals are to be found to the east, in Southern Burma and on the Malaya Peninsula. He tries to trace their origin from their somatological characters, and says that "the Dravidian type, although the prevalent one, is by no means the only one found. Several Aryan types are met with and a Mongoloid one is not very uncommon. Other types may be found, but are too few to be taken into account. All this proves mixture of blood at some

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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614 None of these appear to be associated with the idea of culture heroes as amongst the Amerindians. [538] The folk-lore shows indeed some stories centering round the plants (betel-palm, Panjaun tree, Sabai grass) and animals (tiger, jackal, leopard, crab). Besides these some of the clans' names centre round industrial objects and articles of usefulness such as chain, earthen vessel, etc. These would be more in line with a belief in objects possessing mana and venerated as such and gradually getting associated with exogamous sub-divisions which might have had a hand in the invention or diffusion of those useful objects. There is no [796] seasonal recurring ceremonial round these objects meant for the preservation or propogation of the animals or plants venerated as ancestors, as in Australia. There [784] is indeed some taboo in the use by the particular sub-clan of the plant and animal venerated as its ancestor. The animal and plant thus venerated are taboo to the clans; none can hunt it, nor can they partake of its flesh. But because of the observation of this taboo the Santals are in no sense plant and animal worshippers. [796] It seems that their idea of bongas inhabiting all creeks and corners of nature, has been extended only to the region of certain animals and plants. In the folklore [793] the bongas are generally represented as using seats of [825] hooded cobras and certain serpents are naturally vene- [262] rated as clan-ancestors; on the other hand, the common water-snake (Dhamna) is eaten by almost all the Santals. Of the animals not eaten by the Santals all are not associated with clan-names such as the Frog, Gibbon, Elephant, Dog, etc.

771 If the religion of the Santals may thus be described 776 as veneration of a Supreme Being and reverential awe

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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The Santals have many things of value in their culture. There are many elements that are well worth preservation and which have a great deal to teach the so called civilized neighbours. 177

The Santals have a large number of folklores and folk songs which contain many new ideas and thoughts. Their art of recreation brings a balance in their life which is lamentably absent in the civilized neighbours. 538

The political organisation of the Santals is worth studying. Although they have neither studied any literature on this line nor they have any written constitution yet they are extremely disciplined people and are managing their tribal affairs in a highly democratic way. The communal life of the Santal is well organised, in which everything is shared even joy and sorrow of one is the joy and sorrow of the whole community. This virtue is lacking in the so called civilized society where life is individualistic and so we find more selfishness in civilized people. 66 62 184

The knowledge of herbs and medicines of the Santal medicine-men is highly developed. Rev. P.O. Bodding with the help of two qualified doctors, Mrs. Bodding M.B. & Ch.B. (Edin) and Dr. B.B. Bogh, collected a large number of plants and other stuff used by the Santal medicine-men. He published the names of the plants and other stuff, the list of prescriptions and veterinary medicines in the memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in two parts.[1] Rev. Bodding men- 278 756 757 278 757 278

1. P.O. Bodding—Studies in Santal Medicine and connected folklore—Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta) Vol. X No. I p. 1-138 and No. II p. 133-426 (1927).

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a great stir throughout the Santal country. The story has become part and parcel of the consciousness of Santals everywhere, and the leaders are still celebrated in songs that are current far from the places in which they performed their exploits. The rebellion had no direct connection with the Sepoy mutiny. Both risings did, however, originate in the unsettled state of the country and the inexperience of the British authorities. The Santals rose against the intolerable rapacity of the moneylenders, with whom the subordinate officials of the government, and particularly the police, were in league. It became necessary to call out strong armed forces to restore law and order before the grievances could be redressed. The rebellion followed a pattern one might expect when ill-armed rioters faced armed and disciplined troops. The Santals gathered, sometimes numbered in thousands, and proceeded to plunder the nearby bazaar towns. In the first flush of indignation and excitement they sought out their enemies, murdering police officials and moneylenders, as also other hapless individuals who came in their way. The alarmed government dispatched strong military forces to the area and proclaimed martial law. The disturbances dragged on in sporadic fashion for over two years, at the end of which the constructive measures of the government began to take effect. A new district was set up with special regard to the need for protecting the land of the Santals, and their village system was used in the organization set up for maintaining order by giving a measure of responsibility to their tribal officials.

Since that date the history of the Santals has been peaceful and some measure of progress has been achieved. It was not however, until the second decade of the twentieth century that the Bengal Government passed an Act—the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act, 1918—which endeavoured to protect Santals and other aboriginals in Bengal in similar fashion. It prohibited the transfer of land from aboriginals without the permission of the courts and prevented the attachment of their lands for debts arising out of causes other than the non-payment of rent. By that time most of the damage had been done, and consequently the Santals are now overwhelmingly in the position of under-tenants. The background of their economic life can be seen in the following example, which is typical rather than peculiar. In 1896 the villagers of Ramboni borrowed the sum of forty rupees from their landlord in order to excavate an irrigation tank on their land. In the year 1913 they were sold

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the tables may be turned on those who lord it over them. In Bodding's collection of the Folk-Tales[1] there are two stories which turn on the fact that the bodies of high-caste strangers house the souls of animals, while the bodies of men of low caste house human and beautiful souls. (The means by which the real person can be discerned is to look at him through the wing feather of a vulture.) In common with other tribes of their group and many primitive peoples in other parts of the world, the Santals refer to themselves as "men" (*hor*). A Santal once said in reply to a direct question as to whether any other race was superior to his: "No, there are no others who are greater than us. You can see that from the fact that even today our womenfolk will not eat rice that has been cooked by Brahmins. Formerly, when our menfolk ate Hindu rice they were made to sleep outside for one night; they could not sleep with their wives. When they brought rice from outside to the house they were made to eat it in the courtyard and clean up the place where they had eaten, and then wash their own eating utensils." Many Santals work as day labourers in the fields of well-to-do caste Hindus and receive payment in grain or sometimes in cooked food. The cooks in the homes of their employers are Brahmins, and so by refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Brahmin they hold themselves aloof from the Hindu social structure. Nevertheless, the complete aloofness of former days has been modified and is maintained only by the women. As one might expect, Santals share with others abhorrence of social customs which do not agree with their own standards of morality, and they exaggerate the iniquities practised by other peoples. The same person said: "When the *Deko* put out their lamps at night they have no sense of what is right and wrong. They respect no one, whether their younger brother's wife, elder brother's wife, their own sister or anyone else. Moreover, they do not respect any of their relations by marriage."

Many of the *Deko* make a living out of the Santal, as the cat finds its sustenance in his home. The analogy is by no means perfect, and its chief value for the Santal is that it ministers to his self-respect. In the Bankura district many of the landlords of the Santals are Sundis, who are themselves classified as an Exterior or Scheduled caste. Their hereditary occupation is the distilling and selling of spirits, and they are usually the lessees of the government liquor and drug shops. They owe their present

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Folk-Tales*, Vol. III, Nos. 74 and 77.

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separate representation. In the elections to the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly which took place in 1946 a Santal offered himself for election for the first time from the Bankura Rural Scheduled caste constituency. He was a member of one of the rare well-to-do Santal families and had received education up to the Intermediate Arts standard of the Calcutta University at the mission college in Bankura. He stood as an "Independent" and he was supported by the Moslem League organization, but he failed to be elected. His rival was a non-Santal member of the Scheduled castes who was a Congress candidate. No Santal has yet been elected to the Bengal Provincial Assembly.

The fact that the dominant Santal attitude to their neighbours is one of suspicion and latent hostility does not mean that this has always been the case. There are some indications pointing to a time when relations between Santals and Hindus were more friendly than they are today. The story already related about the Mahato is one. It may well have been that during the period of Moslem suzerainty the aboriginals made common cause with the Hindus. To go back much farther, P. O. Bodding[1] has suggested that in the story of the *Ramayana*, one of the great Hindu epics, there is a hint of an alliance between aboriginals and the hero of the epic, Ram, when he made war against the King of Lanka. The reference is to the assistance given by the "Hanuman log", or monkeys, who, it has been inferred, may well have been in fact human beings of the stock from which the ancestors of the present-day Santals were drawn. In Santal folklore there are stories which describe the marriage of human beings with monkeys, and there is little doubt that such stories symbolize the results of interracial marriages.

Living as they do in close contact with their neighbours, the Santals have borrowed heavily from the ideas and institutions around them, and in some cases they have doubtless contributed to the common stock. It is almost impossible to isolate certain features in their culture and say that these have been borrowed from non-Santal sources. That which is distinctive in Santal culture is the way in which they have used a common background to conserve their tribal life and to provide themselves with the rudiments of a philosophy. The retention of their language as a vigorous element of their own culture must have preserved much from the ancient days of their own life, and has to some extent cut them off from familiarity with the epics

[1] *District Gazetteers: Santal Parganas.*

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different kinds of rice fields are Bengali. Maize, a cereal that is important in their economy, has a borrowed name, but other lesser cereals retain their Santali names. In Bankura the Santals have lost the use of their own numerals beyond seven, though apparently these are known and commonly used elsewhere. Even so, in Bankura the Santal word for "twelve" is still used in phrases connected with the recital of tribal traditions, as in the phrase *gélbar paris*, meaning the "twelve clans". Iron has a Santali name, but other metals now in use, such as lead, copper and brass, have Bengali names. In addition to brass and earthenware utensils, the Santals make extensive use of the leaves of the *sal* tree (Santali *sarjom*), which they plait to form many varieties of plates, cups, pipes and cigarettes, and they possess a wide vocabulary to distinguish between the different kinds. Brass and earthen pots they buy from others.[1]

The difficulties of determining the extent of their borrowings in the field of religion may be illustrated by the fact that the language of spells and of prayers offered at the time of sacrificing contains a strong admixture of Hindi-Bengali words. This would seem to indicate that there have been many borrowings at this point; but it is also possible that the one who makes the prayers, wishing to put himself into a favourable relation with the spirits, uses a special vocabulary and so removes himself from the common run of his people when he is acting as a mediator between them and the spirit world. Many of the songs sung nowadays are composed in Bengali. There is a large stock of riddles, some of which are asked and answered in Santali, others of which are asked and answered in Bengali, while yet others make use of both languages.[2]

Only incidental reference has been made to the impact of Moslem culture on Santal life. Reminiscences occur of the period of Moslem rule, such as the following statement: "Concerning the *Turuk* (*Turuk*, or Turk, the name by which Santals refer to Moslems), it is said that they ruin our spirits because they cut the throats of fowls the wrong way. If we eat

[1] Another discussion of the linguistic evidence, giving many examples, and the whole stated from a somewhat different point of view, is to be found in Professor Sten Konow's introduction to Bodding's collection of Folk-Tales.

[2] In a suggestive article published in *Africa* for June 1946, Professor F. C. Bartlett has expanded his thesis in the Julian Huxley lecture of 1944 that each primitive culture displays both "hard" and "soft" points. The methods which he has outlined for determining, in the examination of any particular culture, what constitute the hard and soft points, and in particular the story method, may furnish valuable results when applied to the study of Santal culture.

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DANCING, MUSIC AND POETRY

Poetry, like music, has to a great extent developed as the handmaid of dancing, though, again like music, it covers a wider range than the songs sung to the accompaniment of dancing. Much has been done in recent years to collect some of the wealth of poetry among the aboriginals of India.[1] A comparison would probably reveal that the store of the Santals in this respect is second to that of no other tribe in India. A great deal of the poetry is spontaneous in composition and therefore ephemeral. They delight in turning out new songs, and those who possess special gifts of song-making are not slow in exercising them. These new and topical songs give poetic expression to some new experience of the group. The coming of the railway was celebrated, as in the following *doh* type of song:

In the bazaar at Calcutta
The B.B. line carriages have fallen on the rails.
Send news to the Santals of Siuri,
Bring them here.
With a *hir hor khir khor kupi kol*
B.B. line train carriage *ho*,
Push it up once more.[2]

The beauty of a town lit up with electric lights did not escape notice in this snatch of a *lagre* song:

In Asansol
The electric lights
Look sweet, sweet.[3]

Love songs cover a wide range of expression, tender and passionate, as the following examples may serve to illustrate:

A *lagre* song[4]

The birds of the forest are crying,
They cry with different songs, love;
The fish cry softly, love,
My soul cries for you.

[1] W. G. Archer's *The Blue Grove* contains translations of Oraon poetry. *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, by Verrier Elwin and Shamrao Hivale, and *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, by Verrier Elwin, come from Central India.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 3. [3] See Appendix B, No. 4.
[4] See Appendix B, No. 5.

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I will make them, child, make them I will,
But the breath of life I cannot give,
But the breath of life I cannot give.[1]

Song and verse also serve to keep alive the memory of the past. Some refer to the dim past that comes within the scope of mythology and relate to the early days of the human race, as in this *Dàsàĕ* song:

Where, O *Guru*, were cows first born
Where, O *cela*, were men first reared?
In Hihiri, O *Guru*, cows were first born,
In Pipiri, O *cela*, men were first reared.[2]

Other songs keep alive the memory of more recent events, like those that commemorate the Santal rebellion. Others refer to local happenings of a past time, such as the following:

A *jhika* song[3]

There came to the yellow lake
Monilal Raja *ho*,
There came to Chaturpuri
Jadob Siṅ Rani.

Have you heard, Durjon Siṅ,
Raja of Tuṅ land?
Fight, fight,
Tighten your belts.

Poetic forms of expression are ingrained in Santal ways of thought, and appear not only in songs but in different kinds of rhythmic prose. The recital of the traditions brings out clearly the musical quality of the language used. This is true also of the formal conversation between the parties at marriages, in the marriage sermons and in the invocations to spirits. Here, indeed, there is a certain amount of rhyming, a device that plays but little part in the songs. Their speech is shot through with figurative allusions and they are fond of talking in riddles. A fourteen- 538

[1] See Appendix B, No. 9.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 11.
[3] See Appendix B, No. 10.

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CHAPTER 5

SOME FOLK-TALES

FOLK-TALES are meant to entertain, and only incidentally do they instruct. The stories current among the Santals do, however, reveal standards of conduct; they hold up certain types of character as admirable, others as ridiculous or contemptible, and so help to form the judgment of their hearers. Over two hundred stories told by Santals are available in English, for this is a field that early attracted the attention of Europeans living among them. The first in the field was the Rev. F. T. Cole, who in 1875 printed two stories in the *Indian Antiquary*. A further collection of tales was published in 1891, collected by the Rev. A. Campbell. The collection of C. H. Bompas, entitled *Folklore of the Santal Parganas*, was published in 1909, and this has remained a standard collection in the West. Bodding's monumental work in three volumes was not published until the years 1925–29. It contains ninety-three stories with Santali text and English translation, and the same plan was followed in his other publications, *A Chapter of Santal Folklore*, which contains ten stories, and *Witchcraft among the Santals*, which contains eight. The editor of this last work, which was published after Bodding's death, states that C. H. Bompas obtained the manuscript of many stories from Bodding.[1]

The field is far from exhausted. All collections that have been published up till now have been gathered either in the Santal Parganas or in the district of Manbhum, except for eleven stories published in a book that deals with the Santals of Mayurbhanj,[2] the extreme south of the Santal country. The tales included here are told in the Bankura district and serve to illustrate the Santal attitude towards many of the facts mentioned in other chapters.

(1) *The Grey Monkey and a Boy*

At the end of a certain bazaar there were a great many trees where lived a band of grey monkeys. Each day one of the

[1] Oslo Ethnographical Museum, *Skrifter Bind* 3, Hefte 3, p. 257: "Years ago most of these tales have been retold from Mr. Bodding's manuscripts by C. H. Bompas in *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909)." For some of the facts in this paragraph I am indebted to an article entitled "The Folk-Tale in Santal Society", by Mildred Archer, *Man in India*, December 1944, Vol. XXIV.

[2] Charulal Mukherjea, *The Santals*, Indian Research Institute, Calcutta, 1943.

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58 852 been a second marriage, and as they were extremely poor their plea to set up house together had been allowed and the marriage celebration that had been postponed was indefinitely suspended. The time came when they wished to arrange a marriage for their eldest son and they found themselves involved in a difficulty. Until the formal celebration of their own marriage had taken place their son could not marry because in its absence they could not carry out the *caco chatiar* of their boy. The problem was solved by going through one of the permitted forms of marriage themselves, after which on the same day they performed the initiation of their three sons. They were scolded by the villagers who gathered for the occasion, but again pleaded their poverty.

852 574 The whole of the population of the village is invited for the ceremony, and each person must at the very least be given two cups of beer for each child on whose behalf the ceremony is being held. The feast for the whole village is not practicable except for a very few, and it is regarded as sufficient if the village officials are presented with a meal of rice and meat or chicken curry. If possible, the midwife who presided at the birth of the children bathes them in the courtyard by pouring water over them; and if she cannot, this is done by one of the old women present. Water is also sprinkled over the assembled guests. The *jog-mañjhi* [538] [624] recites the myth of Santal origins; beginning from the account of the creation of the world and the founding of the clans, he brings the story up to date by leading to the birth of the children in the particular family with which the villagers are at that moment concerned. Then there follows a dance in the courtyard, and songs are sung in honour of the family. The event [535] [533] is neither preceded nor followed by any period of instruction. Such materials as exist for comparing the institution in different [184] parts of the Santal country suggest that possibly its observance is of greater importance in the north, particularly in the Santal Parganas. Bodding has described the ceremony, basing his 114 852 account on the published Santali account of the traditions.[1] Recently a long and full account of the ceremonial has been published in Santali, and this account comes from the same area but does not include a description of an actual observance.[2] On the other hand, Mr. C. L. Mukherjea's account of Santal culture to the extreme south in the state of Mayurbhanj[3] omits all

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 132]

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Santali Dictionary*, Vol. 1, p. 413.
[2] Stephen H. Murmu, *Karam or Caco Chatiar*, Dumka, 1945.
[3] C. L. Mukherjea, *The Santals*, Calcutta, 1943.

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765 769 the departed spirit who has now taken his place with the ancestors. His son remains under an obligation to name him at the time of the family sacrifices, and his widow owes to him and to herself certain marks of her widowhood. She wears no flowers or vermilion in her hair and she leaves off the iron bangle given her in marriage. Now, however, the family is free to resume normal relations with the world of men and of spirits, for once again they can marry and give in marriage.

761 Death is essentially an interruption of the normal processes of living. In the conditions under which the Santals live it is often sudden in its onslaught; it descends upon a house unexpectedly and usually as a cruel visitant, for the number of those who live to enjoy a peaceful old age is small. It is never due to accident, for this is a concept beyond the range of Santal philosophy, and the living take pains to discover the cause of every death that occurs, for their own protection. Unless steps are taken to prevent a recurrence it is common belief that at least three deaths will take place in quick succession. But it remains wrapped in [538] mystery. In one of the folk-tales it is told how a woman craved a boon from a holy man: "Give me this boon, to know where the *jivi* goes when we die and by what road does it depart, through the mouth or through the nose, and having departed where does it go? Give me to see what happens. Tell me also when I shall die and when I have died where will my *jivi* go?" Man is com- 775 828 pounded of two different substances, *hormo*, or body, and *jivi*, or soul; these are sometimes separated in dreams, and the final [774] separation in death is a fact that none can deny, but what happens then? Death figures in many sayings that express the [539] sense of the unknown. "In this life", runs one saying, "there is eating and drinking and the wearing of clothes. In the next life who knows what there is?" Some will tell that on death the soul [538] of man enters into a large lizard, the *ghinni*.[1] One story that has a wide currency tells of two men who lay down to rest at the foot of a tree. One of them fell asleep and the other was amazed to see a large lizard coming out of the mouth of his sleeping companion. When the latter awoke he said that in his dream he had been led to a place where treasure lay buried. Yet another common saying expresses scepticism concerning this belief. "Whether after death I shall become a common lizard, *kahya*, or a large lizard, I know not." This saying is used to give expression to the ancient materialist principle of behaviour: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

[1] Probably *Tiligua rubriventris*.

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DEATH

When a person is dying inside a house a great effort is made to remove him into the open before the *jiri* departs, for otherwise it will have difficulty in leaving the house, but the concern felt in this case is probably more on behalf of the living than the dead. The road by which the soul leaves the body is not known with certainty, for in addition to the nose or mouth it may depart through the ears, or, as I was informed in a case where a girl had died with her eyes staring wide open, "Her *jiri* went out through her eyes." Some of the ideas current about the future life have a moral content. There is at least an aspiration that the inequalities of this life will be rectified in the next. In the folk-tale quoted above[1] the boon was granted, and to the comfort of the woman who asked the questions she saw the soul of a poor man being treated with great respect, while the soul of a rich man, in this case her own father-in-law, was very roughly handled. Many such stories are told about the souls of Brahmins and men of low castes. Ideas are also held about punishment in the future life. This is reserved for those who have gone scot-free in this world. Those who were greedy are made to carry baskets of dung on their heads. Special tortures are also in store for those who wilfully shirk the payment of their debts, and above all for those who transgress the tribal code of sexual morality as well as for those who fail to show the traditional tribal marks on their bodies.

It would be surprising if any people in India did not show some trace of belief in reincarnation. The Santals accept it in a general way, but it has no great hold on their thinking. Hutton has inferred that the belief in reincarnation in India is a development from the theory of soul-matter or material life-substance of which he has found evidence through examining the cult of the dead among the hill tribes of Assam.[2] There is no need to hark back to such origins to account for the vague belief in reincarnation that is held by Santals at the present day. Every Indian village is able to furnish stories of recognition and memory which "prove" to the satisfaction of the villagers the assertion that men return to this earth in a different form after death, thus popularizing the doctrine of *karma*, which is one of the few beliefs universally accepted by Hindus and is one of the great achievements of Hindu thought. The Santals are surrounded by this atmosphere; accepting it, they repeat the stories which they hear and add others to the common stock. The

[1] See page 158.

[2] J. H. Hutton, *Census Report of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Ch. XI.